



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

PREFACE

Schools have ever been attacked for their inefficiency and the incompetence of their human product. The demand for education which shall be real and inspiring, for methods which shall make for more efficient teaching, and for greater economy of time and effort is today more pressing than ever before. For this reason the articles in this volume of the Year Book describe school activities and phases of its practice which appear to have resulted in improved motivation of work, increased interest of the pupil, and a more adequate outcome in terms of individual and social efficiency. Especially do these articles emphasize the importance of direct and continued experience with materials and in constructive activities of a practical and applied character, as an essential condition of educative effort.

That knowledge is the sole end of teaching is universally denied, but this idea still dominates too completely our practice, reducing teaching to the mere transfer of superficial information from books to the pupil's fleeting memory, destroying interest, and substituting false motives for true. This conception of knowledge as a body of facts, fixed, ready-made, apart from the child and his experience, but still necessary to his well-being, must yield to the conception of knowledge as changing, mobile, growing out of previous experience and resulting in a demand for further knowing. Teaching which is inspiring and true, which provides the conditions for real mental growth, has a higher purpose than the development of mere knowledge of facts. Units of study and methods of presentation which are chosen solely with reference to their influence upon the pupil's power to assimilate facts, must fail of that higher purpose, the training of motive, which is the true end of education. If our teaching is really training motive, the pupil is moving steadily toward an ever wider conception of what facts mean and is gaining an ever larger measure of individual power. The body of knowledge which the pupil needs for this growth and expansion comes from a variety of sources, not simply the teacher and the textbook but the whole field of his own activities. Hence, as a fundamental condition of right education, the pupil must come into continued contact with real materials. His

PREFACE

concrete experience must be rich and varied if his mental advancement is to be full and free. One educator has said:

"Concrete experience is essential to the thought processes, to the interpretation of the thought of others, and to the enrichment of one's own activities."

It is not sufficient that our teaching be based upon contact with concrete materials. Experience with materials, however concrete, is valueless unless it has appreciable significance in the lives of the pupils. Organic connection must be made between the pupil's mind and the facts of his experience, and this connection can be made only by the pupil himself. Unless we as teachers put the emphasis on motive and not on subject-matter, we cannot expect the pupil to make this connection, nor can we expect to develop in him any large measure of initiative, of power, of inspiration.

The curricula of our schools have reached the limit of expansion, and the possibility of increasing the time to be devoted to education offers but slight hope for reducing the pressure. In fact, the tendency is to reduce rather than expand the number of years allotted to instruction. The value of each of the available hours must be increased by the elimination of the formal, the useless, the traditional, the merely desirable, the merely informational, and by the retention of the useful and essential. The connection between the pupil's experience and the subject-matter based thereon must be constantly maintained. The problems growing out of experience must be real, and the participation of the pupil in them genuine, if he is to be actuated by that impelling motive which results in growth and a yet higher motive.

Colonel Parker says: "The absolute dependence of the imagination and the powers of apperception upon those concepts which come into the mind by observation, is probably the best known and the most undeniable fact in psychology." "Strength of apperception depends mainly, if not wholly, upon the clear and vivid concepts gained by observation." "The student must have the means, the mental power, to judge for himself, and the bases of that judgment are the products of his own observation." Observation, experiment, and other methods of contact with real materials, train the senses and result in the clear mental images and concepts so essential to development. More and more the school is called upon to make good the deficiency in sense-training formerly supplied by the home life of the

PREFACE

child and his more natural environment. Several articles in this volume of the Year Book show how the school provides opportunities for observation, for personal contact with actual materials, for individual experiencing through which adequate mental images are obtained and the basis for future work laid.

Another and equally important use of concrete experience is found in constructive activities and projects where the application and use of knowledge already gained is demanded. The criticism of schools for their failure to give practical instruction is partly due to the obsolete and unpractical subject-matter which clings tenaciously to textbooks and courses of study, and also in large measure to the lack of opportunity to use in concrete ways knowledge which is directly useful and susceptible of immediate application to problems in the pupil's home and school life. This shortcoming may also be laid at the door of that false conception of the object of education as mere knowledge. Such a conception defeats its own end, as knowledge is defined as past experience organized to meet the demands and problems of new experience. Instruction is not complete until application of facts learned has been made and their usefulness demonstrated by the solution of problems of a practical character which develop out of the study itself and which possess a powerful appeal to the pupil. A number of articles describe activities of this sort, where the pupil utilizes the information he has acquired in the solution of real and vital problems.

No attempt is made in this volume to state in any complete way the basic educational theory concerning the place of concrete experience in school work. Educators are so well agreed upon the importance of concrete experience and teachers on every hand so actively engaged in improving practice in this regard that any restatement of what is generally accepted is unnecessary. Rather, it is the hope of the faculty that the work described, selected as it is from many grades and departments, may show forth in some degree both theory and practice, and may be of some help to other teachers who are attempting to make their teaching more effective and their pupils more efficient through the introduction into the schools of a large measure of concrete experience.